

Spring 5-2018

The Examination of a Magic Show in Its Past, Current, and Future Forms Based Around a Recorded Performance Before a Live Audience

Armory Hermetz
University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses



Part of the [Performance Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hermetz, Armory, "The Examination of a Magic Show in Its Past, Current, and Future Forms Based Around a Recorded Performance Before a Live Audience" (2018). *Honors Theses*. 555.
https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses/555

This Honors College Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

The University of Southern Mississippi

The Examination of a Magic Show in Its Past, Current, and Future Forms Based Around a
Recorded Performance Before a Live Audience

By

Amory Hermetz

A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirement for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts
In the Department of Theatre

May 2018

Approved by:

Monica Hayes, M.F.A.,
Thesis Adviser
Department of Theatre

Elizabeth Lentz-Hill, Ph.D., Chair
Department of Theatre

Ellen Weinauer, Ph.D., Dean
Honors College

Abstract

This project is an analysis and reflection on a magic show performed by myself before a live audience and recorded for documentation. It is a snapshot in time of my progress as a performer at a particular point in my career as a magician. In this paper, I detail my current philosophies on the performance of magic and the reasons why I made certain decisions regarding the structure of the show and the routines I performed. In addition to this, I also discuss adaptations that I have made to these routines since the performance. The analysis is based entirely on opinions gained from my experience of studying the art of magic and performing over the course of several years leading up to this point. These opinions were formed based on personal performance experience in front of live audiences in combination with studying the works of the great magicians of the past and present. My plan following graduation is to move to Nashville, TN to continue my career as a full time professional magician. I include my process of gaining promotional material and rebranding myself in preparation for the move. The point of this project is to capture a clear picture of my progress and development as a performer.

Key Words: Magic, routine, performance, participation, history, future

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Practice Habits and Theory	7
Preparation for the Show	7
My Theory on Effective Practice	7
My Process of Preparing a Routine for Performance	8
Chapter 3: Show Structure	9
First Routine Description	9
Second Routine Description	10
Third Routine Description	10
Fourth Routine Description	11
Chapter 4: Audience involvement	13
First Routine Interaction	13
Second Routine Interaction	14
Third Routine Interaction	15
Fourth Routine Interaction	16
Chapter 5: Lessons Learned and Future Improvements	18
First Routine Analysis and Improvements	18
Fourth Routine Analysis and Improvements	18
Chapter 6: Routine History	20
First Routine History and Credits	20
Second Routine History and Credits	21

Third Routine History and Credits	21
Fourth Routine History and Credits	22
Chapter 7: Future Career Plans	24
Initial Steps	24
Testimonial Video	24
Website Design	25
Conclusion	26
Works Cited	27

Chapter 1: Introduction

Watch the performance before reading further: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u--9sbExVJc>

9sbExVJc

My thesis is based around analyzing the process of preparing and performing a single magic show in front of a live audience. I will detail why I made certain decisions regarding my performance and how they impacted the audience. I will reflect on how successful the show was based on the audience's reactions to each routine. I will point out flaws that I noticed in certain routines that I performed and detail any improvements that I have made to these routines since the performance.

Generally, magic is not perceived as a performance art. It is thought of as a puzzle, and magicians often perpetuate this view by presenting their tricks as simple puzzles without focusing on the finer details of performance and psychology. Through my work, I attempt to eliminate possible perceived solutions through the use of structure, sleight of hand, misdirection, and psychology. My main goal is to share information that puts the work of magicians into perspective and that promotes magic as a theatrical art form rather than just a skillful hobby. To do this, I will detail elements of magic that relate to acting, music, and dance, but I will also highlight unique qualities of magic that set it apart. Concerning research, I will mention both magic and non-magic sources that I consulted while preparing for my show. The magic sources that I mention detail the work of seasoned professional magicians of the past and present who learned their craft through a lifetime of performance experience. Scholarly articles

written on principles of magic, most notably misdirection, will be used to support the information found in these magic books. I will not be sharing methods to the pieces that I performed, but rather, I will delve into the theory of different psychological principles at work to explain why my routines created the effect they did.

The study of magic as a performance art is not an area that receives much attention from outsiders to the craft. Unlike areas of performance such as music, dance, and acting, one would be hard pressed to find a local facility to provide quality magic lessons, and this is undoubtedly due to the secretive nature of magic. This leaves much to be learned by seeking out and studying the available literature on magic. Much of the influential literature written on magic describes the work of highly accomplished and respected magicians. On this list are magicians such as Dai Vernon, Tommy Wonder, John Carney, and David Williamson, just to name a few. Scholarly articles and studies based on performance as well as articles analyzing the psychological aspects of magic were used to provide a basic understanding of the mechanisms behind what makes magic deceptive. Keep in mind, these studies provided only reasoning behind why certain principles work. Books and manuals written by established magicians were used to fill in the gaps of research left by these studies.

Outside of magic, there is an abundance of literature written on all areas of performance. This literature will be used to provide a common ground between magic and other fields of performance. Although these sources are not written about magic specifically, many of the same principles of performance apply, and thus, it is important to have a clear understanding of the principles at work. Rajan details different methods

for keeping an audience attentive and involved in a performance. Her advice is geared toward musicians, describing ways to turn a passive audience into an active one. A major point of her article was to directly address and connect with an audience by breaking the fourth wall (Rajan, 53). This makes the performer seem much more relatable and personable to audience members. With magic, these problems are not as prevalent due to its interactive nature, but the same principles can be applied during moments of long procedure or at certain points during a silent act. The length of a performance and the age of the target audience are two very important factors that dictate an audience's response to a performer (Rajan, 50).

Katevas focuses on analyzing different social signals used in stand up comedy, including intonation, posture, gaze, timing, and expression. These different signals were analyzed in an attempt to study their effect on an audience. These are all effective ways of directly connecting with an audience if used properly. Just like in music, these social signals can help the audience relate to the performer. Magicians have a slightly different dynamic with the audience since addressing individual audience members is a common practice during a magic show, but these social signals still have an enormous impact on the audience's ability to relate to the magician. In addition, they can be used to misdirect the audience away from secret actions by putting the audience's focus elsewhere.

Within the field of magic, a variety of psychological ploys are often used in combination with sleight of hand in order to increase the deceptiveness of the magic. Hergovich analyzed different social and physical triggers of attentional misdirection as

used in a cups and balls routine, a classic piece of magic. The gaze positions of the participants were measured using an eye tracker, and this allowed them to measure the effectiveness of different forms of misdirection. Through analyzing the deceptiveness of several different forms of misdirection, it was found that all forms of misdirection examined effectively diverted participants' covert attention. The study concluded that a combination of different forms of misdirection most effectively controlled the attention of the participants and prevented them from catching on to any patterns.

Similarly, Barnhart analyzed the extent to which certain types of misdirection caused inattention blindness. This study attempted to gain insight into how effective a certain form of misdirection was in drawing the participant's gaze away from a blatant action occurring within his/her field of vision. Although a moving coin was visible for 550 ms, the misdirection was so strong that the majority of people did not notice the coin at all.

Shalom did not study misdirection directly but rather focused on whether people had the ability to notice when their choice was forced and when it was free. Of course the skill level of the performer is a major determining factor to consider, but the study found that participants lacked the ability to differentiate between choices made freely and choices forced on them by the magician. Shalom mentioned that the illusion of free choice is created by a combination of several factors working together rather than a single technique creating the illusion on its own. Different methods of forcing had differing levels of success in accurately forcing the intended outcome, but whether the force was successful or not, the choice was perceived as free.

Kuhn describes misdirection as it is used by magicians in relation to how psychologists use it to study the human brain. He mentions that this area of study is still in its infancy, but he does detail the important scientific research that has been done on misdirection and inattention blindness up to this point. He states that numerous studies have concluded that misdirection is incredibly effective in manipulating what people see (Kuhn, 4). Memmert mentions that findings dealing with differing forms of misdirection used in different circumstances can not necessarily be compared to one another (Memmert, 1098). Kuhn responded to the Memmert article above, which criticized some of Kuhn's work. In an attempt to reach common ground, Kuhn admitted that there is still much research to be done and that it is impossible to draw clear-cut conclusions with the small base of information currently available.

Apart from these articles, the recorded works of accomplished magicians were used to guide me through making important decisions regarding the structure of my performance. Magicians such as Dai Vernon, John Carney, and David Williamson have been pioneers in emphasizing the importance of natural behavior during performance and eliminating strange or suspicious movements. To paraphrase Dai Vernon, a good performer is perfectly at ease during performance because he is doing actions that are natural to him; his tricks are adapted to fit him like a glove (Ganson, 34). Other magicians such as Gary Kurtz, Tommy Wonder, and Juan Tamariz have written extensively on the art of misdirection as used in close-up magic as well as the art of presenting magic in an interesting and theatrical manner. As Kurtz states, "The script, for me, is what establishes an ambience, hopefully inspiring the audience to see the

magical occurrences in a new light (Kaufman, 9). One point that all of these performers stress is the need to perform consistently for live audiences. The timing of misdirection is an essential factor in performing deceptive magic, and it is something one can only learn through performance. It becomes an engrained part of one's character when performing, an instinct of sorts. In my performance I have utilized advice from these magicians as well as numerous others who I will mention in my analysis of the histories of each routine I performed. Bear in mind that although I am only analyzing this single performance, I had carried out numerous performances of this show in different forms in the months prior to this show, and my experience practicing and performing magic extends back to my early teenage years.

Chapter 2: Practice Habits and Theory

Preparation for the Show

Before I delve into the structure of the show itself, I will take some time to describe the process of practice as it relates to my progression as a magician. Typically, I do not have a structured practice schedule unless I am preparing a new show. For this particular performance, I did have a structured performance schedule because I was planning to try out several new ideas in the show. In the weeks prior to the performance, I set aside approximately an hour each night to run through the show and fix any problems that I discovered. Some days, I would find a potential problem within one part of a routine and spend several hours trying to fix the problem and make the handling smooth and more imperceptible rather than running through the entire show. Often times, I would video myself performing a particular sleight of hand move over and over again, making slight adjustments each time. I would then watch the footage and pinpoint the moment when it was most imperceptible. This method helps me perfect very difficult sleight of hand because it allows me to see myself in the same way an audience member would.

My Theory on Effective Practice

In order for practice to be effective in many areas, patience and attention to detail are vital. If a person tries to practice a move quickly without paying attention to finger positions, he/she might learn the move eventually, but it will likely have many flaws and imperfections. I like to break a move down into each minor movement that makes up the whole action. This way, I can understand exactly what my hands are

doing at each point in the move. Another important point for me is to stay relaxed when I practice. If my shoulders, face, hands, legs, or feet are holding unnecessary tension, that will carry over into performance and draw undue attention to the move when it happens. Practice is a process of experimentation, making mistakes and attempting to fix those mistakes through minor adjustments until a satisfactory result is achieved. I have found that having an end goal in mind with regard to practicing a move can be very helpful. It gives me a sense of focus and motivation.

My Process of Preparing a Routine for Performance

In addition to the sleight of hand aspect of performing magic, movement and scripting are two components that must be practiced and rehearsed. Once the sleights involved in a routine have been practiced sufficiently, my next step is always to choreograph my movements to disguise these sleights in the most natural way possible to avoid arousing suspicion from the audience. Once I have the movements down, I will run through the routine repeatedly without speaking until the movements blend together naturally. The final step is to script the routine. To do this, I usually run through the routine as if I'm talking to an audience. I try to come up with logical things to say at different points in the routine to justify certain movements. I will slowly type up a script as I come up with different lines to say while I run through the routine repeatedly.

Chapter 3: Show Structure

As far as the basic structure of this show is concerned, this is something that I have had a lot of success with and that I will continue to use as long as I am getting the results I am looking for. I will break down the structure of the show that I performed and what I was trying to accomplish with each routine. Later on, I will reflect on each routine and detail the areas that I felt needed improvement. The show consisted of four separate routines that were strung together in such a way that created a natural build to the ending climax.

First Routine Description

The opening routine in the show was meant to quickly establish my credibility as a performer. The effect was a prediction of a freely named card in an envelope that had been in view from the start of the show. (I have since altered this routine drastically and developed it into something far more effective, but I will detail that later on.) The point of this routine was to hit the audience with a very strong and clear effect within the first minute or two I was on stage to warm them up so that I could then move on to more complex and involved effects. In a sense, I wanted to ground the audience and allow them to get a clear grasp on the type of performance they would be seeing. This is very important because if you do not ground the audience with the first effect, it will take a while for them to get their footing and begin to understand what the show is about. There must be no confusion as to what is happening in the opening effect and why what they are seeing is impossible. Also, if the first routine takes too long to reach the initial climax, the audience will be too bored to care. Another characteristic that I thought was

very important to include in this opening routine was verbal interaction with the audience used to establish rapport and show the audience that I have a sense of humor. I did this by tossing the “telepathic ball of grocery bags” into the audience for someone to catch, and the person who caught it got to name the card that would inevitably be in the envelope.

Second Routine Description

The second routine was a series of impossible, visual penetrations and restorations with a piece of rope and a ring. The point of this routine for me was to further draw the audience into the magical world that I was trying to establish while also adding texture to the show. The other three pieces in the show involved playing cards, so the rope added a much-needed break in-between those pieces. The rope routine has many different moments of magic happening in a rather quick succession, and that is a major reason why I like it as the second piece in my show. After I have already established myself with the opening routine, this piece helps to further convince the audience of my abilities as a performer and allows them to see that I can perform miracles with objects other than cards. The first two routines in the show are all about hitting the audience with as many impossible effects as possible to prepare them for the last two effects which involve more build-up and involve audience members participating on stage.

Third Routine Description

The third routine in the set was a teleportation of a number of cards from the pocket of one spectator to the pocket of another. During this routine, I bring audience

members onto the stage for the first time in the show. In my mind, this is the second strongest piece in the show in terms of audience impact, but in order to be this strong, the audience has to be comfortable with me leading them through this journey. This is why the first two routines are so important to establishing my persona and ensuring the audience is comfortable with me. This third routine is also longer and has more build up to the climax than the first two routines. Therefore, the audience's energy from the beginning of the show must overflow into this routine in order for it to have the level of impact that I am looking for. If everything goes right, this is the trick people will talk to me about after the show.

Fourth Routine Description

The fourth and final piece in the show was a card to pocket routine. This is the strongest piece in the show, so I chose to close my show with it, thus leaving the audience on a high note to remember the show by. In this routine, a selected playing card is signed on the face with a permanent marker by a participant who is brought up on stage. It is very important that the card is signed so that the audience knows for a fact that the card that ends up in my pocket is the same card that was selected earlier. If the card is not signed, the audience will simply presume that the card in my pocket was a duplicate of the one chosen and that it was there from the start. In this routine, the selected card travels to my pocket twice before ending up in a sealed envelope inside of my wallet. This is the strongest piece in my show, and it allows for a lot of "play" with the audience, as you can see from watching the video. This particular routine contains three distinct effects: card goes to pocket, card goes to pocket again,

and card goes to an unexpected impossible location. In other words, an initial effect is performed, that effect is repeated under test conditions, and then an unexpected third effect catches the audience off guard. This structure allows me to end the show on a huge climax, and that is exactly what you see in the video.

Chapter 4: Audience Involvement

Each piece in the show involves the audience in different ways and to varying extents. In my experience, it is important to refrain from bringing participants onto stage until the audience has gotten comfortable with me. If the audience is still unsure about me or hasn't gotten to know me a little bit, bringing a participant on stage could be a little bit awkward, because the person will not know what to expect and will, therefore, have his/her guard up. This is why I did not bring anyone onto stage until the third trick in the show, and even then, the trick I performed involved two people rather than just one. This way, neither person felt singled out because they had someone else on stage with them who was going through the exact same experience. I like to choose two people who know each other very well, generally a married couple. In this show, almost everyone in the audience knew each other and was very willing to participate, so I just asked for volunteers and brought two up who I thought would be fun. Each of the two tricks prior to this one served a specific purpose in building up to this point where I brought two people on stage.

First Routine Interaction

In the first trick, I made a point to break the 4th wall very quickly to establish a connection with the audience. I did this by getting people involved without having them come onto stage. In the video, you will see that I chose someone to toss the ball of grocery bags behind himself for another person to catch. This immediately established the idea that the show would require participation from the audience and that it is not all about me being on stage and showing off. I also spoke directly with an audience

member by having the person who caught the grocery bags name a card. This broke the verbal barrier and let the audience know that it is okay to speak directly to me on stage. Especially with an audience like this that is used to being quiet during a performance, it was very important to establish the fact that we can talk directly to one another.

Second Routine Interaction

The second trick with the rope was really meant to establish my stage presence. I did get the audience involved by having them examine the rope and the ring, but this routine was more about giving the audience a short break to sit back and watch something very visually stimulating before going into the next piece which would require a lot of participation. The varying levels of audience participation with each trick adds a necessary feeling of texture to the show that goes beyond the effects themselves. Of course, it is very important to have variety in the types of effects performed, but a large contributing factor to creating that sense of variety lies in varying levels of audience participation. If I pulled a single audience member on stage for each trick, the show would have a somewhat linear feel to it regardless of how different the effects were. With the rope trick, I am still interacting with the audience by allowing them to examine the ring and the rope, but for most of the routine, I am on stage alone speaking to the audience without directly speaking to any specific person. For routines like this, it can be difficult to keep the connection with the audience. If the trick draws on too long, I can lose their attention, or if I am not careful, it can seem like I am only showing off.

To combat the first of these two issues, I kept the pacing of the routine rather quick after the objects were examined. This routine has a lot of magic happening in a short amount of time, so it is important to flow from one moment into the next without hesitation or unnecessary pauses; this could ruin the flow of the routine. To combat the second of the two issues (showing off), I have found a couple things helpful. Firstly, I make sure to always add comedy to my routines. It lets the audience know that I am not taking myself too seriously and that I am there to help them have a good time rather than to show off my skills. Secondly, I downplay most of the magical effects in the routine rather than building them up. If I build up each moment as a miracle, people will naturally want to resist responding to them because it may seem like I am presenting myself as a miracle worker when I am clearly just a regular guy. The more down-to-earth I am, the more the audience will be able to relate to me and the more they will be caught off guard when these miracles start happening. I use these same techniques in the other routines in the show as well, but they are especially important in the rope routine because of the fact that I am alone on stage addressing the audience as a whole.

Third Routine Interaction

For the third trick in the show, I bring audience members on stage for the first time. At this point in the show, the audience should be familiar with my character and should be comfortable with me leading them through the experience, so this is a great time to invite participants on stage to help me out. As I mentioned earlier, this third routine is longer and has more build up than the routines that came before it, but it has

a higher level of audience participation, which makes this build up interesting. This routine involves two participants each counting ten cards and placing them away on their person. This procedure in and of itself is not interesting to the audience watching, so to combat this, I get the audience to count along with us. This is a common solution to this problem used by many magicians. This routine is all about playing and interacting with the audience. After the packets of cards were placed away on each participant, I went through a bit about tossing invisible cards from one person to another to get the participants on stage to play a bit more and take some of the spotlight for themselves. In the video, Jorge was very interactive and had his own way of catching the invisible cards. Each time I perform this routine, the participant comes up with his/her own unique way of catching the invisible cards, and, often, it will become a running gag for the rest of the show. The playful nature of this routine also serves to put the audience's guard down leading up to the climax when it is revealed that the cards actually travelled from one person to the other. This routine really establishes the idea that I am there to have fun and not to embarrass anyone in the audience. It is a perfect lead-in to the final routine where I have to single out one person to come on stage with me.

Fourth Routine Interaction

For the final routine, I invite another audience member onto the stage as I set up the premise of performing their favorite card trick. The fact that the audience just saw two participants have fun on stage should put them at ease so that the new participant does not feel nervous or singled out. The participant knows it is a safe environment and

that I am not going to do anything to embarrass him/her on stage. I appear to mess up the trick at a certain point in the routine. This creates a different dynamic in the relationship between myself and the audience and allows them to see a side of me that is more vulnerable. It also leads to very fun and expressive interactions between myself and my participant on stage. The difficult part is, of course, getting the audience to believe that you have actually messed up. I can not explain exactly how to do it other than to learn through actual performance in front of live audiences. If the audience believes that I have messed up, the reactions when I proceed to successfully produce the card from my pocket become substantially stronger. This routine really has the power to draw the audience in and hit them with something they do not expect, and it can create the feeling that we all experienced an impossible miracle together.

Sometimes, though, the audience can feel cheated when the magician repeatedly pretends to mess up before fixing it in the end. I did not want to end the show with this feeling of cheating the audience. When I give the two dollar bill away to my participant at the end of the show, this re-establishes my sincerity and that I am there to give a gift to the audience, not to make them look like fools. When performing a trick like this, there is a fine line between the audience loving and hating me. Catching the audience off guard is comparable to walking in on someone who is naked. If someone accidentally walks in on them, they will not be very happy, but if someone walks in on them to give them some money, they will get over those feelings very quickly.

Chapter 5: Lessons Learned and Future Improvements

Now that I have explained the basic structure of the show and why I chose to perform each routine at each point in the show, I will detail areas that I have since improved upon in the show. To start off, the rope routine and card teleportation routine (2nd and 3rd routines) have stayed largely the same since this performance. I may have changed the script slightly and added a joke or two but the basic structure of this portion of the show has not changed since this show.

First Routine Analysis and Improvements

The opening routine of the show has changed drastically since this performance. I was not very happy with how this routine played out. It simply was not strong enough and did not warm the audience up enough to prepare them for the next routine. Therefore, I had to make up for lost ground during the rest of the routine. Fortunately, the audience was very receptive, and this was not too difficult. I realized that this effect was too complicated in methodology, and the structure did not make a lot of sense. A major goal of any good routine is for each action to be completely motivated so as to avoid raising suspicion from audience members, and I do not believe I accomplished that with this routine. Also, the routine only had one magical effect in it, and it had a bit too much build up for an opener. Ideally, I want an opener to have a clear and impactful effect within the first 30 seconds of performing before continuing onto a series of other effects in rather quick succession. Since this performance, I have, in my opinion, improved greatly upon this routine. I did like the basic idea of the effect of the card prediction being used as an opener, so rather than getting rid of that completely, I

decided to build up to it instead. I have added a series of revelations of chosen cards leading up to the revelation of the prediction, and this serves to warm the audience up to the basic idea of the type of magic they will be seeing. Since I have begun doing this, the revelation of the predicted card has become far stronger.

Fourth Routine Analysis and Improvements

I have also made a small change to the card to pocket routine that has had a large impact on the reactions that it gets. Instead of pulling out the wallet and giving it to the participant to hold, I have chosen to leave it in my pocket until later on in the routine after we have seen that the card has vanished from the deck and that it is not in my side coat pocket like it was before. I found that handing it to the participant would telegraph the ending to them. They would guess that the card would be in the wallet, and often, people in the audience would shout it out. It was still surprising when the card ended up in the sealed envelope, but it was not as strong as it could be. Pulling out the wallet later on in the routine makes the ending more of a surprise, and I have been getting noticeably better reactions performing it this way.

Chapter 6: Routine History

These routines that I have performed were not created by myself in a vacuum. The principles and methods that make up these routines have very long histories. Several of these routines are considered “classics” and are used consistently by the greatest magicians in the world. The only originality that I claim is in the way that I present these routines and changes that I have made to the structure and handling of the routines to suit my capabilities and performance style. I will explain the histories of these routines and detail the process of creating these tricks. I, however, will not detail the methodological techniques involved in creating these illusions because that would counteract the time I have spent trying to conceal the methodology.

First Routine History and Credits

The opening routine of the show was a combination of principles created by other magicians. I first got the idea for using a card prediction effect as an opener after I saw a wonderful Spanish magician named Alberto de Figueiredo perform and teach his routine in a lecture. His routine involved taking an odd-backed card and placing it into a deck of cards in front of the audience. He, then, had a spectator from the audience name a random card. That card was removed from the pack and shown to be the odd-backed card (*Alberto de Figueiredo Live*). My intention was to distance the odd-backed card from the pack by using an innovative idea with an envelope created by Jeff Kaylor to isolate the card from the start to make everything seem more fair to the audience (TKO 2.0). The basic principle taken from Alberto’s routine allowed me to have access to any card (with an x drawn on it) named by the audience member. This principle does

not belong to Alberto, but his way of using the principle inspired my own. The envelope was just an addition that I structured into my handling of the trick. Although this piece did not exactly work out the way I expected, it led to a discovery that prompted me to improve greatly upon the routine.

Second Routine History and Credits

The rope routine belongs entirely to David Williamson. The structure is exactly as he performs it. I have found no need to change anything about the structure after performing it consistently for around two years. I have simply inserted my personality into it to make it work for me by adapting the script and timing to the way I act naturally. Williamson's routine was inspired by the work of George Sands in his "Sandsational Rope Routine." Williamson took what I think are the strongest phases from the Sands routine and added a couple of phases with a ring to it to create a real mind boggling routine (*Ridiculous*).

Third Routine History and Credits

The card teleportation piece is a rather basic routine. The routine has been around so long that I could not tell you who invented the plot. The structure of the routine is based heavily off of Mac King's brilliant routine in his Vegas show called the "Cloak of Invisibility" (of which there are a multitude of videos available on Youtube), and the presentation was inspired by watching a video performance of Eddie Fechter's "8 to 12" routine originally published in his book *Magician Nitely* (Mentzer 50). In this video, the routine was performed by the great modern master of magic John Carney, so

John was the real inspiration behind the presentation (*Carney 2013 – Online Streaming Lessons*).

Fourth Routine History and Credits

This particular structure for the card to pocket routine is credited to Francis Carlyle, and his original routine, titled “Carlyle Homing Card”, can be found in the book *Stars of Magic* by Louis Tannen (61). My routine was inspired heavily by the work of Mac King. Mac’s routine had several moments of comedy that were very entertaining, but most importantly, they made the magic stronger by making it seem more real. One such moment is when the volunteer “accidentally” pushes the card into the pack before I wanted her to. This moment was borrowed from Mac’s routine. I’m sure plenty of others have used this same ploy, but I first saw it Mac’s routine. Correcting a mistake like this often makes the magic much stronger because it seems like the magician could have no control over what is happening. Whereas Mac produces the signed card from a box of Frosted Flakes at the end, I chose to produce it from a sealed envelope. I’m sure others have applied this concept to this routine, but I have never seen it performed by anyone. Also, as far as I know, the idea of giving away a 2 dollar bill is unique to me. This is vital to the success of the routine for me. First of all, it leaves the audience with the feeling that I have given them a gift, which is very important to me. Leaving the audience on a positive note like this gives them a different perception of what type of person I am. I am not just a know-it-all magician. I am someone who cares about the audience, and I want the show to end on this note. Secondly, pulling the two dollar bill

out of the wallet delays the climax of the routine by, once again, by lowering their expectations before I reveal the card in the envelope.

Chapter 7: Future Career Plans

I will be moving to Nashville, TN after I graduate in May of 2018 to continue my journey as a full-time professional magician and to pursue bigger opportunities. I will go into detail on the process that I have gone through to create a brand for myself in preparation for my move. Most of my work to rebrand myself and prepare for the move has taken place during my final semester at USM. The market that I target includes mainly business functions, corporate events, and restaurants, so the promotional material that I have gathered mostly shows me performing in these environments.

Initial Steps

My first step in creating my brand has been to collect photos of myself performing in the types of venues that I want to get booked in. I mostly want “reaction shots” where people are responding to the magic. These types of shots really capture the essence of what I am selling and show people proof of my abilities as a performer. At the same time I was collecting these photos, I was also getting a new logo designed.

Testimonial Video

I worked with Cotton Blues restaurant in Hattiesburg from January 27th of 2017 to May 12th of 2018, when I moved to Nashville, TN. I strolled around the restaurant and perform close up magic for the customers while they wait for their food to be served. I have formed a strong relationship with the owner of the restaurant, Chris Ortego. His brother Nick, who I met several times while performing at the restaurant, owns his own marketing business, so I hired him to put together a video for me. The first step was to get some photos of me performing at the restaurant, which Nick did

himself. I was booked for a local event shortly after this put on by the Greater Pinebelt Foundation, and I hired another photographer to get some pictures at this event as well. Nick then set up video interviews with three of my past clients, including Chris Ortego. Nick took all of this material as well as my logo and created a promotional video which I now have on my website: www.amoryhermetz.com.

Website Design

My next step was to get my previous website and business card redesigned. At the same time, I went ahead and put in an application to trademark my slogan “Astonishing Corporate Entertainment.” Rather than designing my site and business card myself as I had done in the past, I chose to hire someone to design them. I am a professional, and I want my promotional material to be displayed in a way that communicates my expertise. If it looked like an amateur designed my site and card, it would give off the vibe that I am an amateur, and that would undoubtedly cost me in the long run. After researching and finding people who I wanted to work with online, the process was actually quite simple. The one challenge was rewriting the copywrite on my site. This was difficult because I had to write in such a way that would convince people that they need me at their event rather than any other form of entertainment that they might have considered. In addition to this, I had to include “keywords” within the text. For example, some of my keywords are Nashville, magic, and magician. The more I include these words in my text on my website, the more likely my site will be to appear when people type in those words on Google, Bing, or any other search engine.

Conclusion

My work collecting promotional material will never be over. I plan to constantly collect more as I improve and grow my brand. I am very happy with my progress thus far, and I am proud to present myself in the way that I am currently, but who knows where I will be in a year. I may have an entirely new website with new pictures and video to present. There is an art to selling yourself just as there is an art to performing magic, and as long as I am improving and learning as fast and efficiently as I can, I will be happy. I am the only person that can hold myself back.

Works Cited

- Alberto de Figueiredo Live*. Performance by Alberto de Figueiredo. P3 Magic Theater, 2015.
- Barnhart, Anthony. Blinded by magic: eye-movements reveal the misdirection of attention. *Frontiers in Psychology* Volume: 5 (2014).
- Carney 2013 – Online Streaming Lessons*. Directed by John Carney. Performance by John Carney. CarneyMagic, 2013.
- Carney, John. *The Book of Secrets*. CarneyMagic, 2004.
- Ganson, Lewis. *The Dai Vernon Book of Magic*. L&L Publishing, 1994.
- Hergovich, Andreas. Magic and Misdirection: The Influence of Social Cues on the Allocation of Visual Attention While Watching a Cups-and-Balls Routine. *Frontiers in Psychology* Volume: 7 Issue MAY (2016).
- Katevas, Kleomenis. Robot Comedy Lab: experimenting with the social dynamics of live performance. *Frontiers in Psychology* Volume: 6 (2015).
- Kaufman, Richard. *Unexplainable Acts*. Richard Kaufman, 1990.
- Kuhn, Gustav. Misdirected by the gap: The relationship between inattentional blindness and attentional misdirection. *Consciousness and Cognition* Volume: 20 Issue 2 (2011).
- Kuhn, Gustav. Misdirection – past, present, and the future. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* Volume: 5 (2012).
- Memmert, Daniel. The gap between inattentional blindness and attentional misdirection. *Consciousness and Cognition* Volume: 19 Issue 4 (2010).
- Mentzer, Jerry. *Magician Nitely*. Jerry Mentzer, 1974.
- Minch, Stephen. *Carneycopia*. Louis Falanga, 1991.
- Minch, Stephen, and Tommy Wonder. *The Books of Wonder*. Vol. 1, Stephen Minch and Tommy Wonder, 1996.
- Minch, Stephen, and Tommy Wonder. *The Books of Wonder*. Vol. 2, Stephen Minch and

Tommy Wonder, 1996.

Rajan, Rekha. Front Row Seats: Preparing Young Audiences for Live Performances. *Music Educators Journal* Volume: 103 Issue 1 (2016).

Ridiculous. Directed by Luis de Matos. Performances by David Williamson. Essential Magic Collection, 2013.

Shalom, Diego. Choosing in Freedom or Forced to Choose? Introspective Blindness to Psychological Forcing in Stage Magic. *PloS One* Volume: 8 Issue 3 (2013).

Tamariz, Juan. *Five Points in Magic*. Editorial Frakson Magic Books.

Tamariz, Juan. *Sonata*. Editorial Frakson Magic Books.

Tannen, Louis. *Stars of Magic*. Louis Tannen Publishers, 1961.

TKO 2.0. Performance by Jeff Kaylor. The Magic Estate, 2012.